

Dr. Richard Scotch

Professor of Economic, Political, and Policy Sciences at the University of Texas at Dallas

Interview conducted by

Laura Cohen

On March 27, 2018 in Dallas, Texas

Disability Studies Minor

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Biography

Dr. Richard Scotch was born in 1951 in Chicago, Illinois. He earned his BA from the University of Chicago, and his MA and PhD from Harvard University in sociology. Dr. Scotch joined the faculty at the University of Texas at Dallas in 1983, where he is currently a professor in the School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences. He has published numerous books and articles, including the first book on the history of disability rights, *From Good Will to Civil Rights* (1984). Dr. Scotch also served in many professional organizations including the Society for Disability Studies, where he served as President from 1994-1995. Throughout his lifetime, Dr. Scotch has been involved in many social and political movements. His vast work in sociology and disability history has earned him many accolades and awards.

Topics discussed

- Disability History book and creation of Society for Disability Studies
- Funding and Growth of Society for Disability Studies
- Starting *Disability Studies Quarterly* Journal
- President of Society for Disability Studies
- Changes to *Disability Studies Quarterly* Journal
- Changes and Issues facing Society for Disability Studies
- Administrative work at UT Dallas
- Community Work
- Further Publications
- Community Work continued
- Current Research
- Current Roles and Responsibilities
- Future of Disability History

Cohen

This is Laura Cohen interviewing Dr. Richard Scotch for the UT Arlington Texas Disability Oral History Project. Today's date is Tuesday, March 27, 2018, and I'm at the University of Texas at Dallas. I am here today to talk with Dr. Scotch about his work in disability history. This is the second of two interviews with Dr. Scotch. The first interview took place on Thursday, March 15, 2018.

Thank you again for participating in the university's oral history program. I'd love to just pick up right where we left off. You were discussing your book, and your work with, um, Adrienne Asch and Irving Zola, so I will just let you continue on from there.

Scotch

<topic>Disability History book and creation of Society for Disability Studies</topic>

Okay, well, the book [*From Good Will to Civil Rights*] came out in 1984, and it led to my being invited to some gatherings of scholars to discuss disability policy and disability history, and, um, to meet some of the other people who were doing work in history and social sciences at the time. And probably the most important was...what would become the Society for Disability Studies. That was originally a subsection within the Western Social Science Association, which is a regional social science body that has the various disciplines, but also some specialty topics. And within that group, there had been a group of sociologists who had started a section on chronic illness and disability, and they were from a variety of institutions around the western United States. And they were joined by Irving Zola, who I mentioned the other day when we talked, who was at Brandeis University, a suburb of Boston at the time. And they, this became, this annual meeting became a place for people to do networking and present their research with each other, and basically provide a lot of support because a lot of people who studied disability were not...there was not a critical mass of people within their own academic disciplines or their own professional groups. And it was a very diverse group from a lot of different disciplines and all over the country, and eventually globally. And people of different career stages, and some were more activist than scholars, and some were more policy makers, government officials, or working in policy practice settings.

So, the first meeting I went to, at the invitation of my colleague Adrienne Asch, was, I believe, in the spring of 1985 when the group met in El Paso, Texas. And since that was not that far from Dallas, Adrienne, I met her there and got to know a number of people. And it was an interesting group because it was small enough that there weren't several tracks as there are at most academic meetings, so there was only one session focused on disability at any one time. And the sessions ran over typically a day and a half or two days, and so we were all basically in the same room together for all of those sessions, and there was a lot of continuity from one session to another. Usually at an academic meetings, people present their papers and there's a little discussion and then everyone's off to the next session, but in this case, everyone remained in the room together and that really helped to create a number of personal bonds among us. And, uh, one of the traditions that started was that we would go to somebody's hotel room at the end of the day, and people would bring drinks and snacks because we couldn't afford to go to the bar, and so it was christened the Moveable Feast since it went from different rooms different evenings. But...I met some of the people, Zola and some of his prominent students who had either studied with him to get their PhDs in sociology at Brandeis or had gotten to know him through his various activities, but there were others as well, so it was a very active and fertile place. And after going to several of these meetings, the organization decided that there were enough people that we could spin off and become an autonomous organization.

So, I believe the first time might have been in 1989. We met at the same time as the Western, but as the Society for Disability Studies. And one of the interesting things that came out of these discussions to create this group was the idea that this should be its own field, and that it should be called disability studies, with a kind of homage to women's studies and African American studies, and other ethnic or group studies. That this should become an alternative model of that. The other I think interesting thing was it was quite deliberate, I think this was Zola's idea to call it the Society for Disability Studies because the initials were SDS, and SDS had been, there had been another SDS, Students for Democratic Society, back in the sixties that was one of the premier student activist groups in the anti-war, anti-Vietnam War movement, and other student movements of the sixties. And so that was kind of a signal to the world, and to ourselves, that this would be not just a scholarly group, but also a group that would try to promote social change.

And so, the first meeting I said, I think Denver, and after that we started meeting on our own. And through those meetings, we tried to keep it as long as possible with just one session per meeting. There were some other kind of informal norms that developed. We discouraged papers that dealt with particular impairments. We really wanted work that encompassed a broader range of impairments, that were more generic rather than, you know, a study of spinal cord injured people or.... We also wanted to incorporate the perspective of the lived experience of people with disabilities. Most of the work in sociology and other fields had had a very medical focus and focus looking at the impairment from the perspective of medical professionals or government officials, but we wanted our focus to be on the perspective of people with disabilities themselves. And that kind of built to some extent on Irving Zola's role in medical sociology where he in the sixties and seventies had emphasized the perspective of patients as well as physicians. So we wanted to continue that.

So, it was a relatively small group. There were, I don't know, forty or fifty people who would come, and not all of whom would present. Some of the key figures, there was a political scientist, a couple of political scientists, one named Harlan Hahn who at that time was at the University of Southern California. He was the mentor of Paul Longmore who became one of the very influential historians. There was another political scientist, David Pfeiffer, who was a professor at Suffolk University in Boston. And (coughs) both of them, like Irv Zola, were polio survivors, and both of them, like Irv Zola, had established themselves professionally by doing research that didn't necessarily involve disability at all. But as...really in the eighties, a lot of scholars with some personal interest in disability turned to the academic study of disability. So Hahn did some very important work. He also published one of the first reviews of my book (coughs) and so that was positive, and I was thrilled because he was so, significant figure. David Pfeiffer and I became close friends and collaborated on getting the *Disabilities Studies Quarterly* out which I'll get to a little later. But there were others, Elaine Makas, a psychologist who lived in Maine; Sharon Barnartt, a sociologist who was on the faculty at Gallaudet University; Barbra Altman, who at that time was...she had gotten her PhD in sociology, and I'm not sure exactly where she was working in the early days (coughs). She ultimately was at the National Center for Health Statistics and the (coughs) Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and became a kind of main authority on how official surveys defined disability and the questions.... And she's still active now, although she's retired, in some international activities to try to bring different national censuses to use similar measures so that cross-national comparisons can be more easily done. Sharon, I wrote a book with later on, and she...had written a very important history of the Deaf President Now! Movement at Gallaudet, where the deaf students demanded that the President be someone with a hearing impairment which had never happened before.

So, there were a number of us, and some people came and some people went in SDS. A couple of the other people I knew where Phil Ferguson who was a historian of education and very involved, I think, with the Disability History Association later on, who had been at Syracuse and wrote some important work on the history of services for people with intellectual disabilities. There was, well I can't remember everybody who was involved, but maybe other names will come to me.

Scotch

<topic>Funding and Growth of Society for Disability Studies</topic>

But it survived as an autonomous group, and after a couple of years I was elected to the board. And so we would have these endless board meetings. The sessions would be in the daytime at the annual meeting, and then we would have a board meeting that might last five or six hours into the evening in somebody's hotel room, and, uh, because everyone was volunteers and there were no staff it was, if somebody suggested something, somebody had to, had to figure out who would do it. So SDS continues to this day, although they had to suspend having annual meetings a couple of years ago for financial reasons. But it grew fairly steadily in the eighties and into the nineties, and it particularly benefited from some financial support during the Clinton administration. There's an agency that funds disability and rehabilitation research that at that time was N-I-D-R-R, NIDRR, the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research. It had originally been called the National Institute for Handicap Research so, changed the name in the nineties. Um, but the woman named Katherine Kat Seelman, S-e-l-m-a-n, was appointed director by President Clinton at the same time that a woman named Judy Heumann, who had been one of the leaders of the Disability Rights Movement, whose personal history is captured in a lot of work. But she had started a group called Disabled In Action in New York, and was as a teacher who had to sue to get hired by the New York City School System because she was a polio survivor and a wheelchair user. But at the time, prior to her appointment as Assistant Secretary for Education over all the federal rehab agencies, she had been involved with the World Institute on Disability in the Bay Area [San Francisco Bay Area] Oakland, that had been founded by Ed Roberts, who was also one of the earliest leaders of the Disability Rights Movement, and had been a student activist at Berkeley [University of California, Berkeley]. So Judy was the Assistant Secretary, and Kat was the director of NIDRR, and as such, she had some discretionary funds, and she was able to direct them to fund some international scholars to attend SDS meetings in the nineties, and to fund some special symposium that were held. One of them brought some bioethicists who wrote about disability, but had no real knowledge of disability, to come and talk and hopefully learn from, and maybe argue with academics who were critical of how bioethics as a field had considered disability and the quality of life of people with disabilities. Kat also was able to direct some money for scholarships to permit graduate students to attend SDS.

So, in the nineties, particularly from 1994 on, there was a lot of growth. And the group started meeting more regularly in Washington [D.C.] where people working in policy settings on disability issues would be able to attend. And then we would also meet regularly in Oakland, California. So...throughout much of the nineties, we were going, about every third year we would meet in D.C., and about every third year we would meet in Oakland, and then we would find...another place the third year. When we met in the Bay Area, the Bay Area has, really since the sixties, been a concentration of disability activism, and so we would get a lot of activists who would attend the meeting. And so, both of the streams of the policy people and the activists, as well as the scholars who went regularly made it a pretty viable organization.

Cohen

Very cool.

Scotch

<topic>Starting *Disability Studies Quarterly* Journal</topic>

Now, um, the...maybe I should talk a little bit about *Disability Studies Quarterly*...

Cohen

Sure.

Scotch

Which was, started out as a, some of the people who read this may not be familiar with what a mimeograph machine is, but it was basically a way of printing multiple copies of something. You would type, basically cut a stencil, and you would turn a crank, either by hand or was later on with a machine, and it would, was basically a kind of simple kind of printing press. This was before copiers really became common. And so, *Disability Studies Quarterly* started out as a newsletter that Irving Zola distributed to his mailing list. He had many many contacts with many many different kinds of people, and he started that out of his office at Brandeis [University]. He was...after having been at Brandeis for a number of years, he was given an endowed chair. I think it was the Mortimer Gryzmish Chair. I don't remember how Gryzmish is spelled.

Cohen

That's okay.

Scotch

But, uh, it probably doesn't matter since there was no connection personally with this guy who had given the money. But that gave him some clerical support, and so he was able to...and some funding that he could use for postage. This was of course before the internet. And so he was able to send this out on a quarterly basis, and it started out as the...I don't remember the exact name, but it was a newsletter that dealt with chronic illness and disability and ultimately became *Disability Studies Quarterly*. But for his, he ran it, and he would basically compile news items from a wide variety of fields. He knew everybody from nursing to gerontology to history to law. And he knew people all over the world. And so people would send him information or would write little pieces. I wrote a few short pieces for it in those days. So that, it was not exactly an academic journal, it was more like a newsletter, but it did have some reports of original research, but it was not peer reviewed in any sense. It was basically whatever Irv thought belonged there, but he had a very broad and inclusive idea of what ought to be included.

Scotch

<topic>President of Society for Disability Studies</topic>

(coughs) Excuse me. I had been elected to the board of SDS, I don't remember when that started, around 1990 or so. And, um, in 1994, I was elected by the board—the membership would elect the board, and then the board would elect officers—and so I was originally going to be Treasurer, but because the person who had been selected as President had had some second thoughts, and decided that he wasn't going to have time to do it. Because it was an all-volunteer organization, these officers had to do all the work themselves. And there were often fairly strong disagreements among the board members about how to do things. We were all, it was all very collegial, but people had some strong opinions about things. And so it involved a lot of kind of consensus building, and this fellow was just not, felt that he didn't want to take that on. So about one in the morning, we decided to switch, and so he became the Treasurer, and I become the President. But that was in, I think it was in 1994, and a couple of months after that happened, Irving Zola died. He had been in his early sixties, but as a polio survivor, a lot of people with polio as they aged.... The polio epidemic had been in the fifties, and so there were a lot of people who had survived that, but many of them developed some serious health problems later in their lives. So there was a kind of a second, it was not an onset of polio, but they developed respiratory problems or cardiac problems, and it was not uncommon for them to not have a long typical life span.

Scotch

<topic>Changes to *Disability Studies Quarterly* Journal</topic>

And so Irv passed away, and this was of course very upsetting to so many of us who had personal connections to him, but it was also a challenge for the organization because *DSQ* was essentially the communication... this was of course before the internet, so you can't really imagine how dependent we were on getting these, every three months getting the newsletter and finding out who was doing what, and, uh, having little pieces that we could share and argue about or.... Because many journals, there were no real academic journals at that time, now there are several of course, but at that time there were no journals, non-medical journals, devoted to chronic illness or disability, particularly with that, what we would call disability studies perspective now, looking at disability based on the lived experience of people rather than their medical condition. Um, and so, we had a lot of discussions. One of the things that saved the journal was that David Pfeiffer was chair of the Department of Public Administration at Suffolk University in Boston, and he was able to get the cooperation of Brandeis to transfer all of the stuff from Brandeis, which is in the suburb of Boston in Waltham, to his office in downtown Boston. And he was able to get his, as the department chair, he was able to get his university to commit to support it. And it continued as a newsletter for several years, and David became the editor, and I helped him. And then later in the nineties, we decided to try to give it a little more professional appearance. And so, around 1996 or seven, we transferred the production of the newsletter, turning it into a journal, and it was physically produced here at UT Dallas...One of the things that precipitated the move was that David retired from his faculty position at Suffolk and moved to Honolulu, Hawaii where he was given a faculty appointment at the University of Hawaii campus at Manoa, which is a neighborhood, a part of Honolulu. And so, they were very supportive of him taking on this editorial role, but they did not have the capacity to really physically produce it. And so, because SDS was getting some of this extra money from NIDRR from Kat Seelman...we had more people attending the annual meeting, we had people who'd been getting the newsletter free, willing to pay subscriptions. And so it's fairly expensive to produce a professional journal, much more than now. Now you can distribute it for free, but the actual costs of printing and postage were several thousand dollars a year, and that's not big money, but none of us had access to that kind of money. But for about four years, we produced the journal here. And, um, a couple of other things that happened within...and ultimately, I guess I should finish that thread, David passed away, and SDS also was experiencing some serious financial problems in the early aughts. And so around 2001, we suspended the physical production of it, and over about a year, it transitioned to becoming an online journal which meant that we did not have to charge for subscriptions because there was no, there were costs involved with posting things, but substantially lower ones that had been the case to get the printing and get the postage, some of which was sending things internationally as well as just within the US.

Scotch

<topic>Changes and Issues facing Society for Disability Studies</topic>

So SDS continued to evolve through the nineties, with this, at some point the journal came about. The meetings were getting larger and larger. Many non-academics were becoming active in it, and that led to some, I guess, a broader participation and a more diverse participation, but with that came some points of conflict. So, there were several kind of dimensions of it, conflict. One of the dimensions was to what extent should it be a scholarly group, or should it be more of an advocacy organization. I think most of the core people wanted it to be both, but how much you emphasized one or the other, should the journal have peer review for example. Another source of change was bringing in many more people from outside of social sciences that had started largely as a group of people who were from sociology or psychology or other social sciences. A few from psychology, a few from health professions, public health, but, um, anthropology. But as more activists became involved, they had a different idea of what scholarship is and what it should be than others. There were different sessions, there were bigger sessions, but it also meant different professional, different academic disciplines have different cultures. And so the style of writing, even the style of titles, is very different in the humanities than it is in the social sciences.

And so, as the society became more diverse, some of this led to just complexity, I wouldn't say conflict. But I would say some of the biggest conflict was over two particular issues. One of them was this disability studies perspective issue. We were recruiting people, we were trying to grow, we were trying to welcome people from, who had never been there before, but there had developed a kind of orthodoxy of perspective about what kinds of language you used, and just about how you talked about disability or impairment. And so often newcomers were graduate students or new assistant professors who did not understand that kind of culture, who had come up as medical sociologists or as clinical psychologists or as nursing professors or rehabilitation scholars, and they often found when they gave their presentations, to their surprise that there were, they were encountering a lot of downright hostility because of the non-inclusive language, because of the...they were relying on more of a medical model of disability rather than a social model of disability. And so that meant that there were some fairly well established scholars, including some historians, who did not feel particularly comfortable at these meetings because they found themselves criticized for things that they didn't necessarily, weren't that knowledgeable about, and in some cases they were quite open to learning but felt that they didn't get a chance. And so that became an issue for the organization.

Probably a more difficult one was the role of scholars who had disabilities themselves versus those who did not. As the organization was growing, some of the leadership were people like Adrienne who had a disability, but others like Sharon Barnartt or Barbra Altman or myself were people who did not have disabilities. And there were some--and this particularly would come out when we would meet in Oakland as we did every two or three years—a lot of the people who had an identity, not just as scholars but as political activists, felt that it was inappropriate for people who did not have personal experience with disability of themselves—Barbra for example had a son with an intellectual disability—but those people were considered not to be, that it would be inappropriate for those of us without disabilities to serve in leadership roles.

At that time, for about two or three years...I guess after Irv Zola died, the SDS offices were also with the *DSQ* offices at Suffolk, and when David moved out to Hawaii, David Pfeiffer, we moved them here [UT Dallas]. And we were able to support the office by having a teaching assistantship associated with, a graduate student assistant associated with the organization that cost a few thousand dollars, but that gave me a twenty hour a week graduate assistant who would help with correspondence and with all the kind of tasks associated with running an annual meeting, with publishing proceedings, with getting the journal out. And so these were seen as perks or privileges by some, and so, uh, there were some of the members who felt that only people with significant experience with disability themselves ought to be taking these roles. And there were some heated debates at some of the meetings. I think a few years later this was kind of receded as an issue, but there were some hurtful things that were said. Often by people who were marginally involved with the organization and were not familiar with its history or sort of with some of the efforts that some people had made to help build the organization, but this was a kind of difficult period.

The next big issue facing the organization occurred after 2000 when as a result of the election results, Clinton was out, and George W. Bush was in. And as happens, NIDRR, the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research, N-I-D-R-R, had new leadership. Kat left—she went to become a program head at the University of Pittsburg, she still is—and the new leadership at NIDRR was also accompanied by, there was a lot of professional turnover among the senior staff there. A lot of people had kind of hung on and then retired with the change of administration, not necessarily for political reasons but for more, for personal reasons. But there was a much less close relationship between NIDRR and SDS. Kat had not only provided some financial support to get students involved and to get international scholars involved, but she had also very consciously tried to bring more disabled people and people who studied disability from a disability studies perspective onto peer review panels that, who decided who got the grants. And that, what that meant was that if you were studying disability humanities or disability social science, that wasn't strictly a narrow clinical or technical rehabilitation

issue, you could get support for your work. And so a much broader group of people got federal grants. That changed in 2000, so it meant it was much harder for people who do research in the area to get support for their research. It was much harder to get a high score from people who had a very narrow view of what quality research was. That was also often within the medical model, but often excluded humanistic kinds of research that didn't, wasn't testing hypotheses and using, doing randomized recruitment of subjects and so forth. So that was a loss in terms of members of SDS, but it also led the organization into a financial crisis even though we had gone to online publication which reduced the costs of putting out *DSQ*. The annual meeting still was a major expense, and there were constraints that made it difficult to support the organization. There were expenses of getting meeting rooms, of printing programs, of getting, you know, AV, audio visual equipment, and for SDS it became much more acute than for a typical research organization because we had a lot of people, scholars who had disabilities and who required accommodations. And so in order to have its meetings...when I was involved as a, when I was the Executive Officer for the group, well the headquarters was here for several years, and I was involved with a local arrangements committee making all these preparations. You needed, at that time sign-language was typically what was used for people with hearing impairments, now it's of course CART but.... Are you familiar with that acronym CART?

Cohen

(shakes head no)

Scotch

It's, uh, it's basically real time translating. A CART reporter...

Cohen

Oh, okay.

Scotch

Trained person...

Cohen

Very cool.

Scotch

Types as in real time while someone is speaking, and so the audience can read,

Cohen

Oh, that's cool.

Scotch

Um, so what would have been a sign-language interpreter now involves someone and some equipment.

Cohen

Oh, okay.

Scotch

Which is not cheap.

Cohen

Sure.

Scotch

And if you're having a bunch of sessions, having that for all the sessions for a three day meeting was a substantial expense, and while Kat was at NIDRR, we were able to get some financial assistance to provide that. We couldn't do it, so that meant some very difficult choices and tradeoffs. If you want to provide full accessibility, you have to pay for it. So one way of paying for it is to have higher registration fees, but we also wanted to be accessible to graduate students and to community people, and so that meant having low registration fees. I mean there were other sort of special issues. You know just working with, finding hotels that would be willing to work with you. Not just that the rooms were accessible, but to have a place where their service, where people's service dogs could toilet. You know getting a sand pit in the parking garage so that the dogs could relieve themselves, getting training for the restaurant staff, and getting, making sure that there were braille menus, even just getting braille programs. I mean it was much more difficult before you could do it using, you know, electronic medium which meant that I had to go find, print braille programs...

Cohen

Wow.

Scotch

Which wasn't cheap and took a lot of time. And when people who are not always timely in turning things in...or about indicating what they wanted, what they would need at the meeting to participate. And you know we had a lot of members who were activists...whose style of getting what they needed was to demand it and to be very confrontational about it. So that, as the resources became less available, it created additional conflicts between some of the members, and some very serious financial issues for the organization because it kept, because of its strong commitment to broad participation and to providing accommodations, they kept spending money that they didn't have. The membership dues...and the registration for the conference was not sufficient to pay for all of these accommodations, so that led to some difficult choices.

And there were some other, kind of interesting in retrospect, but difficult things. In the late nineties, we started getting more members (students can be heard talking in hallway) on the autism spectrum who were not always use to the kinds of conventions of scholarly meetings. Who were able quite easily to communication via email, but not always had a great facility in face to face interactions, so just bringing them in meant some adjustments on both sides. I can remember one conference, we met up in Minneapolis I think in 1998 or so, and to save money we had tried to, everyone who wanted audio visual equipment, which was very expensive for the hotel to provide, so we tried to put all the sessions where people wanted it in the same meeting room. But it meant that some random person giving a paper who said, "I need a microphone and I need this," and you know that was going to add several hundred dollars for that one presentation, so I was running around saying, "No. No. If you wanted that, we'll move you into the room where it's already available." So it was, it was complicated. And that was kind of along this also, in the context of some of this tension over whether people with disabilities should be the main people organizing things. I felt this was, you know I was doing this as a service; some other people felt that somehow, I was getting great career benefits out of it. So that was a difficult time, and some difficult budgets for the organization.

And there was also I think a generational turnover in leadership within SDS, so that the group of us who had really gotten it going when it was mainly in social sciences and it was mainly a scholarly group in the mid-1980s, had been doing it fifteen years. It was time to bring in new people. And so when new people do things, there's a learning curve. And so some mistakes were made in communication, in budgeting, and in a variety of things. And so the group went through a difficult transition in that period, and some of the efforts to make it more inclusive meant that people were given responsibilities that they weren't quite ready for. Students for example. They made a student Treasurer. He didn't really know much, he was a smart guy, a nice guy, but didn't know much about finances and made some mistakes.

So it went through a transition, and meanwhile, several of us who had become involved as sociologists started to kind of withdraw from active participation, in part because we wanted to let other people run the group, in part because we wanted to try to get something going within our own academic disciplines. So that was when efforts began to try to create disability studies-like sections or interest groups within a variety of other professional organizations. And so we have one in the American Sociological Association. There's one in the Society for the Study of Social Problems, the American Anthropological Association has a caucus, the American Public Health Association has an interest group. So there've been, some of these have been more successful than others. The Disability History Association I think was organized around that time, in the early aughts. It may have been there longer, but I'm not aware of it (students can be heard talking in hallway). So that was good, but that also took away some from the one SDS being the kind of crossroads organization. And it also came at a time for academics when it was harder to get travel money, and travel was becoming more expensive, hotels and airfares, so you had to choose (coughing from someone in hallway). You know, you couldn't go to three or four different groups, you had to maybe go to one or two. And so if you had to choose between the professional group that was where your academic appointment was which would be helpful for tenure or promotions, professional recognition, or some interdisciplinary group that was not as well known by your colleagues, didn't know much about disability studies, there were more people opting out. (pause)

Scotch

<topic>Administrative work at UT Dallas</topic>

And so, I kind of took a few years where I did not go to the SDS meetings, I had put a lot of effort in. I was...changed my responsibilities here as a result of being promoted to full professor and being asked to take on more administrative responsibilities, and being involved in some community activities, that I kind of became less involved with SDS and.... Ultimately started going back to meetings in the late aughts, and kind of reconnected with some people who I hadn't seen very often and made some new colleagues. And some of the people I was in disagreements with early on became good friends as we kind of.... There had always been good personal relations; it wasn't personal, it was more political kind of

disagreements...So I became, started going back to the meetings around 2009 or so. I think, I did go to one meeting when David Pfeiffer died around 2005 or so. There was a memorial for him and I went and spoke at that, I was invited to go speak at the memorial, at a meeting in St. Louis. So the organization has survived. It's very diverse. It has a lot of very active young scholars. It's very promising, but they still have some serious financial issues. Having meetings is very expensive. Being an inclusive organization makes it harder to get funds, and so that kind of participatory urge verses the fiscally responsible urge are at odds with one another. And I think to some extent that's exasperated by the fact that a lot of people who study disability are somewhat marginal in their universities or colleges. It's a little harder for them to get the kinds of financial support that people in more accepted and established subfields can get, so.... I think I need to stop for a couple minutes.

Cohen

That's fine.

Scotch

Let's...maybe we can take a break.

Cohen

Yeah, absolutely. We can take a break, and then we can come back and talk about...

Scotch

It's 11:10 [A.M.]. I've got plenty of time, but if you...

Cohen

Oh no, I have time too, so whatever you...

Scotch

Okay. Well I'm going to get some hot water for tea.

Cohen

Still would like to share.... Absolutely, go ahead. I'll catch up on my notes here.

Scotch

Okay. I'll be back in just a minute.

Cohen

No worries.

Scotch

(holding up a piece of paper from desk) If someone shows up to sign something...

Cohen

That's it.

Scotch

That's it.

Cohen

(laughs) Alright, I'll pass it off.

(students heard talking in hallway)

Pause in Recording

Cohen

Alright, go ahead and continue when you're ready.

Scotch

I should explain that in terms of my career, I've had a kind of series of cycles, three to five years, where I focus a lot on academic research, or I slow down on the academic research and take on administrative responsibilities within the university, or I get involved in community activities that take time away from my scholarship or my university duties. So as all assistant professors, my first four or five years here I really focused on trying, as well as all my teaching responsibilities, to try to get a body of publications out so I would be ready for my tenure review, and so I did that in the eighties, and was promoted to associate professor with tenure in the spring of 1989. And had begun work on a second book following up on my dissertation research, and spent some of the summer of 1989, 1988 doing more interviews. I went out to the Bay Area and interviewed several of the activists in the San Francisco Bay Area. I interviewed people on the East Coast. I interviewed some people in the Midwest. But I was invited to become an Associate Dean and look over the undergraduate programs in social science which at that time was a very time-consuming job. The work that I did in that role is now done by two...an Associate Dean, an Assistant Dean, and three advisors.

Cohen

Wow.

Scotch

So, I did all the advising for our undergraduate students as well as scheduling and administrative tasks. And so that really slowed down my scholarship. And I did that job for four years, and while it was a rewarding and interesting job, it really slowed me down in terms of my work. And while that, during that four years, the ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] passed. And while I was aware of it from going to SDS meetings where in face we got to see the 1988 version of it, and the 1989 version of it, and.... I wasn't able to, and I had also gotten married, and so I was trying to spend some time with my family, and our daughter was born ultimately in 1991. And so it was harder for me to go do work, research work in D.C., and I was really kind of out of the loop in terms of a lot of the final run-up to the ADA which is described really well by several other scholars, Lennard [J.] Davis and Jonathan Young and others. But, um, so I have these interviews that I conducted, but I never got that book together.

Scotch

<topic>Community Work</topic>

And then after the four years of associate deaning, I got very involved in some community activities not directly related to disability. I was involved in a major community needs assessment that we did for the United Way. I was involved with being the local evaluator for a program called Healthy Start which addressed teen pregnancy and infant mortality issues, so it was indirectly related to disability, but not.... I still consider myself a medical sociologist as well as a disabilities studies person. And then a little later in the mid-nineties became involved with work on HIV/AIDS issues, and to some extent that was an opportunity to learn a lot about the issue, and to some extent it was an opportunity to do some outside work. I was hired by Dallas County to prepare some of their grant applications for services under the Ryan White Act. And for about four or five years, I was very active on HIV issues, and did some academic work related to the grant writing and evaluation and planning work I did with the Dallas County programs...So my involvement with disability was largely through my institutional involvement with SDS rather than my own scholarship, but that seemed--as I was becoming a more senior person—that seemed very appropriate.

Scotch

<topic>Further Publications</topic>

So, by the late 1990s, I started phasing out of SDS activities and trying to refocus my work on research and writing, and so...I had given up the second book because it was just too difficult to do it in Dallas, Texas. If I had been in D.C., it probably would have been a lot more feasible. But there were other people doing the work, and so it didn't really need to be done. But I got involved in some different projects. One of which was I had encouraged the publisher of my first book, Temple University Press, to publish a second edition based on, that came out, well it came out in 2001, but it was supposed to be around the tenth anniversary of the ADA. I was invited to participate in several symposia related to the ADA's tenth anniversary, so I worked on a couple of law review articles. One for Berkeley's Journal of Labor. I don't even remember the name of it. (reading name off journal from shelf behind him) *Berkeley Journal of Employment and Labor Law*. That did a symposium on the ADA that ultimately became a book, so I wrote something for that. And then Ohio State also did a symposium on the ADA that led to another book.

I was also invited by Paul Longmore, who I had become quite friendly with as a result of our mutual involvement in SDS—although we started out arguing with each other, we become quite good friends—and he invited me to contribute something to a historical work that he was editing with Lauri Umansky

that was published by NYU [New York University] Press. And I was...the National Rehabilitation Association has something they call Mary Switzer Scholars where they invite people to come in and talk about disability and rehabilitation issues, and so I was made a Mary Switzer Scholar and wrote a paper for that conference that was published. So I was doing a lot of writing for about three or four years, and that was around the time I was about to come up for full professor so that was not completely fortuitous, to some extent it was strategic to get another bunch of stuff.... I mean I'd been writing little pieces for *DSQ* or for other disability collections, but I very self-consciously tried to get a lot out. The final thing I forgot to mention was that Sharon Barnartt who had developed this really interesting database on disability protests, and she invited me to collaborate with her on a book, that ultimately was published by Gallaudet University Press called *Disability Protests* that to some extent was the results of an analysis of her database, but I did some writing for the book independent of that. So that came out in 2001. The new edition of my book [*From Good Will to Civil Rights*] came out in 2001. These two law reviews came out around 2001.

I was also collaborating with someone I had met at SDS named Kay Schriener, S-c-h-r-i-n-e-r. Kay had, ran the doctoral program and rehabilitation at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, and we started working on a book on the Disability Rights Movement for...the publisher would have been...for use in college courses, all original research, more synthetic. But she developed some health problems, and so about two-thirds of the way through it, she had to pull out of the project. And I tried later on to collaborate with another, with one of my former students to get the book finished, but she kind of was not...she was doing other things, and so I didn't feel like I could do it myself, so we kind of...that book never happened either.

But I was promoted to full professor and that led to some more involvement in administration here. So I've been...I had been head of the sociology program for a long time, but it's very small and didn't require a lot of work, but I was in the mid-aughts became involved with helping to run the doctoral programs and the public policy program and ultimately became program head of that, and helping to run the public affairs program which is a separate program. And so I was doing a lot of administration work and have been for the last fifteen years or so. So that has meant less time for scholarship. And a lot of the work I've done has been collaborative with coauthors, some of them my students or former students, some of them colleagues from other schools. And so most of the work I've done for the last dozen years or so has been collaborations. So that included work with Allison Carey. Sharon Barnartt and I had written a proposal to the American Sociological Association back in the early aughts. They have a fund for the advancement of the discipline where you can get a modest amount of funding for scholarly projects, and so we organized a conference on sociological theory and disability that was held at the...in like a two day conference right before the American Sociological Association. And we invited some, in addition to the kind of usual group of suspects, we invited some more junior scholars. One of whom was a woman named Allison Carey who at that time had finished her PhD and had written a really terrific dissertation that ultimately became a terrific historical book on policies about intellectual disabilities and citizenship. So I kind of got to know her at this theory conference that we held in Chicago. And so we've kept in touch and have collaborated on a number of things. The first big thing we did together was a special issue of--see it's all very incestuous—a special issue of an annual called *Research and Social Science in Disability*, edited by Sharon Barnartt and Barbra Altman. Two of my old friends from SDS. And Allison and I edited this special issue that came out (takes book off shelf behind him¹) in 2008 I guess. (flips through book) 2011. We started work on it in 2008, on *Disability and Community*. So that was mainly editing other people's work, although I wrote the introduction.

Something else I was involved with was again more editorial than original writing. The *DSQ*, the *Disability Studies Quarterly*, this would have been around 2008, I was invited to propose a special issue on the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. I guess we decided...it was published in

¹ Allison C. Carey and Richard K. Scotch, co-editors, "Disability and Community", *Research in Social Science and Disability*, Vol. 6 (Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2011).

2015, so I guess it would have been around 2013 that we started work on it. And I invited a couple of people to do it with me, and they were too busy, so I did it myself. But we published...I can't give you something to show because it was published online, but we had about ten articles in there, and I edited those, and that was a very positive process, and we came out the summer of 2015, right around the time of the 25th Anniversary of the ADA. And I got to know actually a few people through that editorial process and have worked on a book chapter with one of the authors who I had never met.

And I guess the other big project I did in the mid to late aughts was...historical. And this is where I started getting more involved in disability history again. Susan Burch, I don't know if you're familiar with her, but...

Cohen

(shakes head no)

Scotch

She's a very prominent historian of disability whose written several books, and had been on the faculty at Gallaudet and then at Ohio State, and is now at Middlebury College. But she edited—I've got it at home, so I can't show you—but it...she was the...for an organization called Facts on File. They created an *Encyclopedia of American Disability History* which you may have seen or may not have seen. It's both published as a physical volume and online.

Cohen

Oh, okay.

Scotch

And it came out in 2009. So that was a two to three-year process. So, I was kind of one of the editorial board and was basically in charge of all the entries on policy. And so I wrote about, I don't know, about twenty of them myself and got a number of other people to write them, and was involved with the editing, and so that was a multiyear process. And that came out in 2009. I think I sent you my vitae, so you'll see the list of all the little...some of them were very short and some of them were a little longer.

And as that was coming to pass, I went out to a conference on disability history that Paul Longmore organized out at San Francisco State which is where I met Sarah Rose. She was just finishing her dissertation and about to take her faculty position at Arlington [University of Texas at Arlington]. I don't even remember what year that was, but it would have been around 2008, about ten years ago. And met several other people at that, it was a really interesting conference. (pause)

<topic>Community Work continued</topic>

So I took another period where I was more involved with community stuff, and was on a board for the Mental Health System in North Texas, the Public Mental Health System, and shared the board for three years. And became involved in mental health stuff, and at the same time was invited to direct a new program we had for premedical students, a partnership with our, with the medical school here in Dallas, with UT Southwestern. And so I spent a lot of time on that, for the last six years, but that program's now kind of winding down, so...

Scotch

<topic>Current Research</topic>

My current activities, after I finished the ADA special issue, and Allison and I finished the *Disability and Community* issue, so one kind of long term project I've been involved with, with Allison and another colleague Pam Block, another person I had met through SDS. Both Allison and Pam were Presidents of SDS during the aughts. Pam was an anthropologist at the Stony Brook University or the State University of New York system. This came out of some conversations I'd had with Allison after her book on disability and citizenship had come out, about the parents' movement when I was doing the work on, for the encyclopedia. And Professor Rose had also gotten me involved with a textbook that was supposed to be coming out on the history of poverty in the United States. So I wrote a chapter, I was going to write three chapters for it, the book project ultimately never came off because...everybody just got too busy. So I had written one and a half chapters. But the chapter that I wrote which was on basically social poverty and social policy from, in the immediate post-World War II era, got me interested in some of the disability organizations that were founded in that period, most of which were parent organizations. And there was no real historical scholarship on any of them, or on this parents' movement. And yet that, as I had written about in my dissertation, was the kind of precursor to the Disability Rights Movement. I mean there were other precursors as well, but one of the major...threads leading into the disability rights, particularly in the policy area, was some major court cases that lead to the passage of idea, the...Federal Special Education Mandate, which were initiated by parents' organizations. And to a large part that dealt with some of the major court decisions on deinstitutionalization, and the rights of people in facilities, and the right to education, building on the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. You probably saw Linda Brown died yesterday...

Cohen

Oh, yeah.

Scotch

Who was Brown in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Cohen

Oh, wow. Yeah, no, I didn't see that.

Scotch

But this got me interested in these parent organization and why they had started when they did. And so Allison, and Pam, and I have been working for the last few years, off and on, on this book project, and we've got a contract now with Temple Press, and we're supposed to finish by next fall. I wrote a chapter on psychiatric organizations concerned with psychiatric conditions that partly came out of my work on the mental health board and working with advocates, self-advocates and parent advocates. So I wrote that chapter, and I'm now working on a chapter on physical disabilities that I've been collecting these...I don't know--you're the historian--what the word is, but basically histories and memoirs written in the late forties and early fifties...

Cohen

Oh, okay.

Scotch

By parents about the organizations they started which included Easter Seals, and the United Cerebral Palsy, and Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Cohen

Oh, wow.

Scotch

Those all came—Easter Seals goes back a little earlier—but they all were parent groups that started in the New York area, and either started, or spread, right after World War II, in the suburbs.

Cohen

Oh.

Scotch

So, this I think is a very interesting historical phenomenon and is deserving of some study. And so our book, which is tentatively titled *Allies and Obstacles*, will come out I guess in a couple of years, but we'll get it into the press probably October, November, next fall. And one of the themes is how these parent groups organized and became effective, but another is their ambiguous relationship with the Disability Rights Movement because parents are very effective advocates for their children, but sometimes as their children become adults, there are tensions between what the children want for themselves and what the parents want for their children. And there are particular issues about sexuality and about independent living where parents may become problems for the independence of their kids as well as supporters. And so, we're kind of trying to capture some of that conflict and support in this book. So I've got...when we finish, I'm going to go over to inner library loan in the library and get a history of Easter Seals written by Pat Boone who was a prominent singer back in the fifties. I don't know if you've heard of him.

Cohen

(shakes head no)

Scotch

But he was the white guy who covered a lot of African American songs that the white radio stations wouldn't play in the fifties, but he was also involved. I mean there were some really interesting historical figures, Dale Evans and Roy Rogers, who you probably have heard of, had a child with disability.

So, Allison is focusing on intellectual disabilities, and Pam is focusing—she’s an anthropologist—is focusing on Autism spectrum disorder. So that’s one thing that we started ten, Allison and I started ten years ago that really sort of came to fruition in the last couple of years, and we hope we will wrap up by next fall.

Cohen

Very cool.

Scotch

So that’s been one long term project that I’m very excited about.

Another project involved a kind of, started with a chance phone call I got from someone named Sally Friedman who’s a political scientist at Albany University in New York. She’s a political scientist, and she was aware of the section within the American Sociological Association we had created for people who study disabilities that was created by Barbra Altman, and Sharon Barnartt, and to some extent myself back about eight, nine years ago. And so, she wanted to do something similar for the American Political Science Association and that never happened, but she and I started talking. And she had written a book about how women present themselves in their campaigns, in their political campaigns, women politicians. There’s a famous political science book called *Home Style* that talks about how members of Congress represent themselves to their constituents, and so she did a take on women. And based on our discussions...she’s blind and so, and we have some mutual friends, she knew Adrienne for example, Adrienne Asch, which is how she got wind of me. But we decided it might be interesting to write something about political officials with disabilities which has never been done before...with one exception. There’s a book by Hugh Gallagher on Franklin Delano Roosevelt² which was about Roosevelt’s polio but also how he never disclosed it to the general public. I mean it was known among people in Washington, but he never allowed himself to be photographed in his wheelchair. And in fact there was a big fight back in the nineties when they were trying to raise money to build a monument of FDR, and it was going to be a series of, these kind of rooms, I mean they weren’t, it was an outdoor monument, but there was going to be an area...and then a lot of disability, disabled activists wanted there to be an image of him in a wheelchair, and the family didn’t want it because he didn’t want it. And so there was a big fight, and there was actually an organization called FDR in a Wheelchair that was founded. But the issue hasn’t been more generally looked at, and so we’ve published now two pieces. One in *Disabilities Studies Quarterly* and one that’s part of an Oxford University Press political handbook on politicians with disabilities...particularly on how they present themselves. And basically that deals with the evolution with the Disability Rights Movement of people who’ve hid their disability to people like Bob Dole, who was a Senator and disabled World War II veteran, who acknowledged the disability but didn’t really try to highlight it to the present day where you have several office holders who don’t flaunt their disabilities, but rarely readily acknowledge them. So Greg Abbott here in Texas, Tammy Duckworth, who’s a Senator from Illinois, who’s a Gulf War veteran, who uses prosthesis, she’s a double amputee, to a guy who’s quadriplegic, who’s a Congressman from Rhode Island. So these are more kind of...we’re profiling them and sort of discussing the issues of disclosure and press coverage and sort of some of the...just as women candidates have dilemmas in terms of, you know, do you show your, you know, where you’re maybe considered to be overly aggressive where as a man would be seen as leader. You know, so how do you deal with your disability? A lot of people associate it with a lack of capability. And some of it’s about changing public attitudes, and some of it’s about just a willingness to sort of go public with this stuff. So that’s...I don’t know if I’ll write another piece or not. We’ve talked about doing some interviews, but we keep in touch. Her second piece just came out a few months ago.

² Hugh Gregory Gallagher, *FDR’s Splendid Deception* (Vandamere Press, 1999).

And then the third piece is based on an article I wrote with Kay Schriener twenty years ago which I think is one of the best articles I ever wrote. It was published in a very obscure place. The title of it was called *Disability and Human Variation* which kind of suggested a new model for conceptualizing disability. But part of the discussion was the kind of mismatch between impairment and environment. Kind of an adaptation of the social model of disability. At that time a lot of the writing on the social model was kind of clunky in my opinion and came out of the UK. So we tried to talk about that and published several articles in that period from '97 when I was trying to get promoted to full professor (laughs) but also writing a lot about disability and suggesting this human variation model. We published something in *DSQ* about it. But, um, I wanted to pick up on that, and there was a special, this annual that comes out (taps book on table), this *Research and Social Science in Disability* had a special issue this last year on employment issues. And so I got...I have a friend, who's an economist, who's on the faculty at UT Southwestern Medical School here in Dallas, he's actually about to retire, but we've been friendly over the years and talk a lot about things. And I invited him to work with me on about...so we submitted it to this version that came out in 2017. It's kind of a cross between a book and a journal that was not based on any kind of empirical work, but was just a more kind of conceptual, here are some trends in the economy and here's how they are going to affect people with disabilities. So there are all these technological changes that make it less important to be physically on the job, so that helps people who have transportation related impairments or mobility impairments. And there's all this assistive technology that also helps people do work, but the nature of work is also very fast paced and requires a high degree of complexity and interaction, and so that may get in the way of some employers' (coughs) willingness to accommodate people with disabilities because of the fast pace and high complexity of work.

So, I had written about that in this 1997 piece, and (pulls journal off self³), in this journal. So we wrote a paper about this that we published last year, last fall, and it just kind of said, "Well here are some trends that are going to help people with disabilities and here are some trends that may create barriers to people with disabilities in employment as the economy changes." And so he and I would like to do some empirical work to try to get ahold of some data on employment trends to see whether some of the things we were talking about, speculatively, might in fact, you could actually find data to support whether or not they were true or not. But it's very hard to get this kind of data because of the way that a lot of employment studies are done. So we've been...we presented this paper at the American Sociological Association last summer, and have been kind of talking ever since about what we might do, and he's got a colleague who's in their rehabilitation counseling program who has to publish stuff for her to get tenure, and so we've been trying to involve her. But I've been too busy with this, and these others, especially this parents book, and he's about to retire, and so we aren't sure whether or when we'll do it. We thought we had access, might have access to some data through a project the university's doing to get more access to federal data, but it turns out it's both expensive and takes a lot of time, and so I don't know that we're going to pursue that. But that's something we would like to do, and we'll probably look into more next year when he's got some more time, when he stops teaching, and I've got some more time because I'll be finished with this parents book.

But it's, I think...One of the really important things, and Barbra Altman has written a lot about this, is we need to study...Instead of just studying impairments and people, we need to study environments. What environments accommodate people, what environments don't, aren't so good at accommodating people. You know, so if you build buildings with ramps..and elevators, you know, you haven't changed the disability, you've changed the environment. You know, so if you have work that scheduled in crazy ways, which a lot of, like in the retail sector now. I don't know if you know anybody who works retail.

³ William G. Johnson, special editor, "The Americans with Disabilities Act: Social Contract or Special Privilege?," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 549 (Sage Periodicals Press, January 1997).

Cohen

I'm sure, yeah.

Scotch

You know, so you get your schedule and, like a day before.

Cohen

Right. Mm-hm.

Scotch

You know, and oh, you got to work this shift, oh you've got it...you can go home, we're not going...our computer model says we're not going to get enough customers to have you come in today.

Cohen

Mm-hm.

Scotch

So this is bad for families, but it's particularly bad for people with disabilities who have all these support systems that require planning, and time, and complexity, and...you know, so there's all this just in time stuff is I think bad for everybody who's an hourly worker, but particularly makes it harder for people with disabilities.

So, just the whole issue of health insurance. You know the ACA [Affordable Care Act] has made it much easier for people to accept jobs that don't have health insurance. A lot of people with disabilities have low levels of human capital. They don't have as much education on average. You know, there's some very high performing people who do great, but the average person with a disability in the work force makes less than other people do and often doesn't have access to health benefits. And so, you know, if they have to give up SSI [Supplemental Security Income] or SSDI [Social Security Disability Insurance] cash benefits, they also have to give up Medicaid or Medicare, and they may not get insurance, but because of their impairment, they may need health insurance more than the average worker. So having the Affordable Care Act at least gives people better access to insurance, although often it's costly.

So, I think studying environments and studying both physical environments but also what kinds of programs enable people to participate in the work force and what kinds of programs make it more difficult for people. If employers are all worried about getting sued. You know, the Trump people are trying to cut back on the ADA's protections, to make it harder to force businesses to accommodate a law that's been around now for twenty-seven years, but you know, a business says, "Oh, we need more time." So that's the kind of thing I want to study, and I think this employment paper will be a way of looking at least about employment, how that works. So I don't know if we'll find the data that will allow us to do a statistical study. Whenever I talk to somebody about the ADA, I say, "Well, you should be studying industries not just employment in general, but are high technology industries employing more disabled people or fewer ones than old style industries?" So, we'll see what happens with that.

Meanwhile, just a few closing comments, and then I can answer any more questions you have.

Cohen

Go ahead.

Scotch

<topic>Current Roles and Responsibilities</topic>

I've kind of settled into this role as an old guy. I've gotten a couple of awards for kind of lifetime achievement scholarship awards from SDS and from the sociology section that we started ten years ago. I was very proud that Sharon Barnartt, and Barbra Altman, and I all got some inaugural senior scholar awards from that.⁴

So, one of the things I do now is a lot of reviewing for promotion and tenure. When someone goes up for tenure, universities sort of look to outside senior people to comment on whether they are, have made an impact on the field. So last summer I did five of these. Which is, usually people might do one.

Cohen

Yeah.

Scotch

But there aren't as many senior scholars, so.... And I know a lot of these people, and I know them by reputation, and some of them I know personally. And so I am in a good position to comment on the contributions that they've made to disability studies or to the sociology of disability, and so I can.... I've been doing a number of those the last few years. I'm trying to focus more on things that other people can't do, so I get...I'll probably do less reviewing for journals now because there are lots of other people who can do that. But this, these tenure promotion things, there aren't as many people who can do that. And I'm trying to kind of mentor some people as well, junior scholars who could use a little help. A lot of it is about networks, and I was very fortunate to have colleagues for helped me out when I was getting started, and so I would like to be able to help others out in the same way.

Cohen

We can conclude with this. What do you hope for the future of disability history?

Scotch

<topic>Future of Disability History</topic>

Well, I'm, have a very optimistic view on disability history. There is a lot of really exciting scholarship that has gone on. We have this kind of senior cohort of historians like Phil Ferguson and Susan Burch, who really, James Trent, Paul Longmore, people who kind of got the specialization going and gave it

⁴ Dr. Scotch was awarded the Senior Scholar Award of the Society of Disability Studies in 2013. Another noteworthy award was the Inaugural Distinguished Contribution Award of the American Sociological Association Section on Disability and Society in 2014.

legitimacy and did really creative, thoughtful, articulate work in the eighties and nineties. But now we have a whole other generation of historians, Sarah Rose, Kim Nielsen, others who are mid-career now, who've gotten tenure, who've published their books, who have positions at mainstream universities and are active in the profession and who.... I think historically, within the historical profession, disability history is still to some extent marginalized. Not everybody acknowledges that's it a legitimate subfield within history, as say women's history, or history of the African American community, or LGBT history. You know, those are more accepted by some than disability history. So I think there's still a lot of work to be done, but I think...As I don't go to a lot of disability history meetings, but I see a lot of people.... You know, when we started SDS, there were almost no historians, and the historians were just really really struggling to get legitimacy within their field. I was on a.... Kat Seelman at NIDRR organized a group in the nineties on the future of disability studies, on disability studies in the twenty-first century. This is before it was the twenty-first century. And Paul Longmore was on it, and David Pfeiffer was on it, and I was on it, and Sharon Barnartt was on it, and other people. But one of the things we talked about was how do we make this more mainstream? How do we make, allow more people to pursue this very legitimate area of scholarship? And some of it was you need minors and majors, and some of it was you need journals that will provide people opportunity to publish their work, and book series within mainstream academic presses. And I think that's happened in the last twenty years since we had those meetings. So I think...it's become institutionalized enough to become self-sustaining. It still could be better, you know, but if someone who's an undergraduate can do an honors thesis and then decided to go on to pursue disability history in their graduate work. If it's considered, not at every department of history, but in some, it's considered a legitimate subfield that somebody can do and pursue and not ruin their career which is what it was seen as thirty years ago. You know, that's what needs to happen, and I think it's happening. I think there is a critical mass of scholars and scholarship that will allow it to happen, and I think that's very likely to continue. I...if you have not read it, I urge you to read Sarah Rose's book, it's just fabulous. And it's well written, and it's historically nuanced. But it's all about what happened with the Industrial Revolution to workers with disabilities. And there's other work that's been done, you know, that will be read, not just by specialists in disability, but if you're interested in the Industrial Revolution, you should read Sarah Rose's book.

Cohen

Sure.

Scotch

If you are interested in military history, you should be reading about, you know, some of the work that David Gerber or others have done on disabled veterans. I just think.... So I'm pretty...I think history maybe even more than other fields.... The legitimacy of looking at disability from that, the perspective of the disabled person, and not just as some charge to public budgets because they are, you know, helpless and incapable. I think that's really happening, so I feel very optimistic about it.

You know, of course it's...there's all kinds of interesting things globally happening as well. And more people studying disability in the context of developing societies, and some of the resource constraints and technological limitations. So, I think there's a lot of interesting stuff going on, and I think history is a field that has, where it's kind of reached the threshold of legitimacy.

Cohen

Absolutely.

Scotch

Now in terms of SDS, I don't know what they are going to do. They seem to be continuing, and they're morphing into inserting themselves into other places. I hope it continues as an active organization. Whether disability studies maintains itself at universities as a major instead of just a minor, outside of a few areas, whether the health professional schools take a less medically focused view of disability, there I'm a little less optimistic. I think there's still a lot of work to be done, that people aren't just seen as... I mean, and there's some areas that have been negative, the whole genetics area. There's been a lot of work on ethics and genetics. You know, people like Peter Singer, who's a philosopher, who basically says, "It's not ethically to allow children with disabilities to be born if you can prevent it." You know, we're also at a political crossroads where a lot of supports for disabled people are getting threatened by the kind of Trump version of conservative politics. Okay.

Cohen

Yeah, Dr. Scotch, thank you so much for your time. And we appreciate...

Scotch

You're very welcome. I hope this has been helpful.

Cohen

It has, very much. Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Scotch

You're welcome.

End of Interview